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Chairman: Mr. Maurer ..... (Switzerland)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 133: Programme planning (A/64/16)

1. **Mr. van der Westhuizen** (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), speaking by a video link to introduce the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) on its forty-ninth session (A/64/16), said that the report included important conclusions and recommendations concerning, in particular, programme changes resulting from decisions of intergovernmental bodies and conferences or suggested by the Secretary-General. The Committee for Programme and Coordination had examined the proposed changes to the programme plan contained in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 and had made recommendations on the changes to programme 24, Management and support services, including on the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Information and Communications Technology.

2. In discharge of its mandate to assist the Economic and Social Council with its coordination functions, the Committee had reviewed the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2008/09 (E/2009/67) and the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (E/AC.51/2009/7). The Committee had recommended that the General Assembly should bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Chief Executives Board, the need to continue to ensure that the Board enhanced its system-wide coordination activity; it had reiterated that any criteria and methodology for the comprehensive evaluation of the eight "delivering as one" pilot projects should first be considered and approved by the General Assembly and that United Nations support for those projects should not prejudice the outcome of the intergovernmental deliberations on system-wide coherence. CPC had stressed the urgent need to fill the post of Special Adviser on Africa.

3. Regarding evaluation, chapter II.B of the report described the Committee's examination of four reports and two triennial reviews of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

4. The Committee had decided not to include the item on improving its working methods and procedures in the agenda for future sessions but to discuss related matters under the item on the adoption of the agenda and organization of work, as required. It had acknowledged that the question of the timing of its sessions in budget and off-budget years merited further consideration: the eight weeks allotted to its sessions during a biennium might, for example, be reallocated between budget and off-budget years, with three weeks in budget years and five weeks in off-budget years.

5. **Mr. Elhag** (Sudan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group underlined the importance of CPC as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programme and coordination. Programme planning involved translating mandates into implementable programmes: CPC formed the core of the General Assembly's oversight capacity in that key area; it interpreted legislative intent and prevented overlapping and duplication. As in previous years, the CPC report provided an excellent basis for consideration of the issues in the Fifth Committee; the Group fully endorsed the recommendations contained in the report.

6. The Group welcomed the guidance given on programmatic aspects of the changes in the programme plans for the current and the next biennium but stressed once again that all the budget fascicles must be identical with the strategic framework approved by the General Assembly and that priority-setting was the prerogative of the Member States alone. It noted with satisfaction that CPC had welcomed the OIOS report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy but reiterated that it was the prerogative of the Member States alone to define the roles and responsibilities of the intergovernmental and oversight bodies and that the legislative mandates emanating from the intergovernmental process constituted the main source of guidance for the Secretariat and the oversight bodies.

7. The Group fully supported the CPC recommendations relating to the Secretary-General's proposal for the alignment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and it regretted that OIOS had supported a proposal which ran counter to General Assembly resolution 63/260. The proposed alignment

would weaken the United Nations focus on the special needs of the countries in question. The Group stressed that OIOS should be guided solely by the legislative mandates emanating from the intergovernmental process and it reiterated its call for the post of Special Adviser on Africa to be filled.

8. Since knowledge management was an important component of the United Nations management reform process, the Working Group on Knowledge Management should be encouraged to assess potential synergies and operational efficiency in consolidating the Knowledge Management Service.

9. The Group firmly believed that CEB should play an important role in improving coordination in the United Nations system and appreciated the Board's efforts to enhance advocacy with regard to eradicating poverty, attaining the Millennium Development Goals and supporting Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It also appreciated the priority given by the Board to the United Nations role in resolving all financial and economic crises. However, it urged the Secretary-General to encourage a more substantive dialogue between CEB and the Member States in order to enhance the Board's transparency and accountability.

10. The Group welcomed the decision of the Committee for Programme and Coordination to discontinue the regular agenda item on improving its working methods; progress had been made on the issue, and it was the prerogative of CPC alone to review it as necessary.

11. **Mr. Råsbrandt** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey, the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, welcomed the report: CPC had held open and pragmatic discussions on its work and its role in the United Nations system and had implemented the measures approved at its forty-seventh session with a view to improving its effectiveness. Those efforts should be continued, for they would help CPC to carry out its mandate and ensure the coordination needed to prevent duplication and overlapping and enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The assistance of the Secretariat was an invaluable element of the Committee's work, as was a closer dialogue between the Committee and the other bodies and services involved.

12. **Mr. Cumberbatch** (Cuba) said that programme planning was essential to the functioning of the United Nations and rightly received special attention at all its stages. His delegation reaffirmed the role of CPC as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in that regard. The OIOS reports submitted to CPC were a useful input, but the intergovernmental mandates resulting from negotiations among the Member States must be strictly respected. The recognition by CPC of the importance of improving its working methods was welcome, as was the progress made in that area. The results of the Committee's forty-ninth session reconfirmed the relevance of its recommendations and conclusions, which his delegation fully endorsed. Cuba would work to ensure that the changes recommended by CPC were included in the programmes which it had reviewed.

13. **Mr. Rana** (India) said that his delegation also reaffirmed the importance of CPC as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programme and coordination, an importance underlined by its critical role in ensuring that the entities which carried out the various programmes adhered to the letter and spirit of the legislative mandates. CPC should therefore be provided with the necessary resources to perform its tasks. Its efforts to improve its working methods were commendable.

14. His delegation endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report and urged the Secretariat to take full cognizance of them. It supported, in particular, the recommendation for approval of changes in the programme plan for the current biennium and in the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

15. The importance of evaluations could not be overemphasized, and the Secretary-General should ensure that they were used to improve the policy decisions of programme managers. His delegation looked forward to the programme evaluation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the thematic evaluation of Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support cooperation with regional organizations and endorsed the recommendation that the post of Special Adviser on Africa should be filled as a matter of urgency. The

proposal for alignment of the Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Representative should be examined carefully.

16. Turning to the evaluation of the Department of Political Affairs, he said that the Office of Internal Oversight Services should refrain from making value judgements on issues which were still before the General Assembly and should take the Assembly's decision to strengthen the Department into account when evaluating the implementation of its recommendations endorsed by CPC at its forty-sixth session.

17. His delegation hoped that the OIOS evaluation of lessons learned would help the staff to improve the work environment. It recognized the importance of coordination bodies such as CEB. It noted the OIOS thematic evaluation of United Nations coordinating bodies, and joined its voice to the call for further enhancement of their work, which would require the scheduling of regular meetings, improved follow-up to decisions, and a mechanism for those bodies systematically to measure their own performance.

18. **Mr. Spirin** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation attached great importance to the work of the Committee for Programme and Coordination as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programme and coordination. The programme planning system must ensure that the Member States were able to establish the Organization's priorities and programme activities and make genuine evaluations of how effectively established objectives were being achieved.

19. In the context of the findings of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and the preparations for the 2010 summit on the Millennium Development Goals, the CPC recommendations on the annual overview report of CEB designed to improve response by the United Nations system to crises were very important. Where CEB itself was concerned, the recommendation made in paragraph 123 of the CPC report was most timely.

20. His delegation welcomed the progress made in improving the working methods of CPC and the decision not to include that item in the agenda of future sessions, which would allow CPC to concentrate its full attention on substantive issues.

21. **Mr. Nguyen Dinh Hai** (Viet Nam) said that the role played by CPC as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programme and coordination was crucial to the Organization's smooth functioning and that the CPC programme evaluations contributed to the effective fulfilment of mandates, while the guidance given to entities of the United Nations system helped to improve coherence and coordination. His delegation endorsed the recommendations contained in the CPC report and expected the Secretariat to act on them. With regard to the OIOS thematic evaluation of United Nations coordinating bodies, there was ample room for those bodies to improve the coordination of programme delivery. All the coordinating bodies, CEB in particular, should give due attention to the CPC recommendations on the subject.

22. **Mr. Hameed** (Pakistan) said that his delegation attached the utmost importance to CPC as the main subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for planning, programme and coordination, for it enhanced the General Assembly's capacity to oversee the Organization's work. The agenda item was a very important one in that it linked intention with action and mandate with implementation.

23. The evaluation of the "delivering as one" pilot countries should be driven by the countries in question and must be inclusive, transparent and independent. A second tier of evaluation to facilitate intergovernmental consideration of the results from the pilot countries would be useful. His delegation welcomed the CPC recommendations and considered that the report provided a solid basis for considering the issues in question in the Fifth Committee.

24. It endorsed in particular the recommendations that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to ensure the dissemination and full implementation of the findings of the various evaluation bodies and the recommendations that the coordination work of CEB should be enhanced and that CEB should meet more frequently with the Member States. It noted the recommendation that the Economic and Social Council should request the Secretary-General to initiate a comprehensive evaluation of the management and accountability system of the United Nations development and resident coordinator system. It endorsed the recommendations on United Nations

support for NEPAD and on the urgent need to fill the post of Special Adviser.

25. **Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh) drew attention to paragraph 138 of the report and said that the proposed alignment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Office of the High Representative clearly violated the mandates and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly: it would weaken the United Nations focus on the special needs of the countries in question; the post of Special Adviser should be filled as soon as possible. His delegation regretted the position taken by OIOS on the issue and reiterated its request that the Secretariat should provide the General Assembly with a clear and credible update on the situation.

26. **Mr. van der Westhuizen** (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), speaking by a video link, said that he welcomed the expression of support for CPC and for the recommendations contained in the report.

Agenda item 131: Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

United Nations Office for Partnerships (A/64/91)

27. **Mr. Dossal** (Executive Director, United Nations Office for Partnerships), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for Partnerships (A/64/91), said that 2008 had marked the tenth anniversary of the relationship between Robert E. Turner's Foundation (United Nations Foundation) and the United Nations system, a relationship which continued to go from strength to strength. In the period 1998-2008 the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships had received over one billion dollars for some 455 projects implemented by 39 United Nations entities in 123 countries. It should be noted that the Fund did not itself implement any projects, but it had succeeded in generating $622.1 million from its partners for project implementation. The original 10-year agreement with the United Nations Foundation had been renewed for a further 10 years, and Mr. Turner remained committed to raising the next billion dollars.

28. The report described the strategies adopted and the projects supported. The approach remained focused on children's health and on population, women's and environmental projects, with a minor component on peace, security and human rights. The table in annex III gave details of the value of the projects. In 2008, some $28 million had been programmed for 33 projects.

29. Chapter II of the report dealt with the United Nations Democracy Fund, which had been a real success story. The Fund's terms of reference had been sharpened in 2008 to make it more responsive to needs. In 2008 the Secretary-General had approved a second funding round, amounting to $23 million for 82 projects. A decision had been taken to focus the work primarily on civil society organizations in order to support the demand side of democratization. Contributions since the Fund's inception now totalled over $91 million. Under the third funding round over 2,000 applications for grant funding had been received from 138 countries.

30. Turning to chapter III of the report, he said that the success of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships had generated a demand for advisory services. Even in the early days many private sector and civil society bodies had expressed an interest in supporting the work of the United Nations, but it had been necessary to dispel some confusion: the Fund for International Partnerships existed to support United Nations programmes and projects, not those of external bodies, and the United Nations Office for Partnerships had been established to provide advisory services. There had been an exponential growth in the demand for its services. It was clear that, as well as funding and implementing projects, private sector and civil society bodies had also become advocates. All the applications received were channelled to United Nations or governmental agencies or to other organizations with the aim of building capacity in the field.

31. The Fund now received over 1,000 enquiries a year. Despite the global economic slowdown there had been a steady increase in the implementation of social programmes by non-State actors. The private sector was clearly becoming interested in the "triple bottom line": not just making profits but taking the social dimension into account as well.

32. One of the priorities was to strengthen partnerships in Africa, by working with the African Union, the NEPAD Business Group and other bodies, with a view to attracting new investments and creating a new role for the private sector in Africa.

33. **Mr. Cumberbatch** (Cuba) asked what criteria the Office applied when selecting partnership organizations.

34. **Mr. Dossal** (Executive Director, United Nations Office for Partnerships) said that one of the biggest challenges was in fact to ensure quality control in the selection process, in order to prevent corporations from using their involvement with the United Nations to "bluewash" their activities. All potential partnerships were carefully considered in conjunction with umbrella organizations, and agencies of the United Nations system applied their own selection criteria as well. The Office itself vetted corporations in accordance with its guidelines on engagement with the private sector. It would not work with bodies which infringed labour, environmental or human rights legislation or were known to be corrupt. Nor would it work with organizations whose activities involved alcohol, tobacco or firearms. It also used external vetting services.

35. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to adopt the following oral draft decision on the United Nations Office for Partnerships:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> *Having considered* the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for Partnerships (A/64/91);
>
> *Takes note* of the report of the United Nations Office for Partnerships (A/64/91)."

36. *The draft decision was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.